The Seed Sower.

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Christmas Cheer.

When all are glad, we must be glad,
And echo well the glee;
No face can keep a look that's sad
Around the Christmas tree;
No heart must bear its burdens more,
But drop them where it stands.
The mind on care must cease to pore,
We walk in happy lands;
A heavenly blessedness is sent
To every hearth and home,
The dear child life to all is lent,
The Christ to each doth come.
So let us carol in our cheer,
A song for Christmas old.
Let's wish our friends a bright new year,
And happiness untold!

A new star shines, the angels sing,
The wise ones wander far,
They gifts of gladness freely bring,
And bless the Christmas star.
It is a time when goodness reigns,
When truce is sent to strife,
When we forget our griefs and pains
And come to love's pure life.
We presents make with largess free,
We hold the angel heart;
As one great family are we
And act a brother's part.
So let us sing the boundless cheer
The choral sung of old,
Let's wish our friends a glad new year,
And hearts all true and bold!

—*William Brunton.*

Our Positive Beliefs:

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT THE MEETING OF THE MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION ON OCTOBER 26TH, 1897.

BY REV. GEO. ST. CLAIR.

"On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."—MATT. xxii., 40.

The Midland Christian Union has been formed "for the promotion of Christianity in connection with the freedom which rejects subscription to any articles of theological belief." Its members would readily subscribe to the following declaration of Dr. Hedge, "A religion wide as the widest outlook of the modern mind; a religion free as human thought; concurrent with reason, co-ordinate with science; a religion in which the present dominates over the past, and the future over the present; in which judgment tops authority, and vision outruns tradition,—this is the instant demand of a liberal faith." Strangers may wonder what holds us together when we have no authoritative form of creed; and may ask what reason we find for worship if we do not at least believe in God. Our answer is that we do believe in God. The fact that we do not shape our beliefs into any

set authoritative form, to be imposed upon either churches or individuals, does not mean that we have no beliefs. Our jealous love of the freedom which rejects subscription to any articles of theological belief does not mean that we have no theology. We believe in Christianity, and we desire to promote the understanding and the practice of it, in its simplicity and purity, free from the accretions, ancient and modern, which partly hide it and threaten to choke it. We admit that our conception of Christianity differs from that which has been common.

Let us come straight to the Master himself. In a question as to what is Christianity, no one can fairly demur when we appeal to Christ. As we read the Gospels, we see that Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter's son, who became a religious reformer in an age when the Jews were bruised and burdened, corrupt and miserable, restless, and looking for a Deliverer. He was opposed by Pharisees and Scribes — the orthodox church members of the time; men, if we may say so, of Calvinistic creed, regarding themselves as the elect, while they were in practice extortioners and hypocrites, satisfied to observe the externals of religion, and the enemies of new ideas and of reformation. In the unequal conflict Jesus died a martyr's death. But not until he had scattered the seed of his teaching broadcast, and insured that it would bring forth fruit a hundred fold.

His teaching was largely about the kingdom of God, and the qualities that would fit one to enter into it. His parables were many; his illustrations were various; but all might be summed up in these two commandments—to love God and to love man. No man or woman with this love in the heart would sin against God, or do wrong to brother or sister. No command of the law would be broken, no precept of any prophet would be neglected, if we were animated by this love. Moreover, God was to be served by helping man—as he had said by his prophet—"I will have mercy (shown to man) and not sacrifice (offered to myself)"—so that practically the two commandments were one. The obligations of that one, again, could be easily remembered in the one precept: "Do to others as ye would have them do to you." The teaching of Jesus was often an amplification of this, but never a contradiction. Keep the commandments, and you have eternal life. Be neighbourly, lend and help. Bear one another's burdens. Avoid offences, forgive injuries, render good for evil, love your enemies. He told about a good Samaritan who helped a wounded Jew, and praised him above the priest and the Levite, who were hurrying up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. He considered him to be more in the way of doing God's will and obtaining God's favour than they were. Not only did he never contradict this description of the method of attaining to life eternal, but he never put forth anything additional as being of co-ordinate importance, as though this were but half the secret of salvation. He told about a servant who owed his king an enormous debt, and was freely forgiven on the sole condition that he should forgive others. Jesus himself lived this manner of life which he recommended; he showed this disposition, and practised this mercy that he inculcated. And then, out of the confidence of his own experience, he said—"The Father is well-pleased with me, because I do always the will of the Father." And then, once more to endorse his general teaching, he said—"Whoso doeth the will of God is my brother, my sister." The Pharisees complained that he did not show his piety in fasting twice a week, and praying when the gong sounded the hour, and offering those sacrifices in the temple which would atone for sins of omission and commission; and his reply was—"Go ye and learn what that Scripture meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." It is abundantly evident that, according to Christ, religion does not consist in saying prayers and performing ritual: nor yet in any belief or orthodoxy, for certainly had he wanted to teach substitution, sacrifice and atonement, he would not have left them out of those two parables of the Prodigal Son and the Unforgiving Servant.

This is a short summary of the teaching of Jesus. We believe it all, we receive it, and we try to practise it. As George Dawson used to say—"It is experimental science; it is not to be argued merely, but to be tried and tested, and he who tries it finds it true." It *is* more blessed to give than to receive; try it! To forgive others is the way to obtain God's forgiveness; we feel it! To have the same mind in us that

was in Christ Jesus is to attain to inward peace; the proof is in the experience.

We then—and all—who sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him, who receive these principles and catch this spirit, and endeavour earnestly to illustrate them in our lives, are Christians. The absence of a formal creed does not make us less than Christians; the claim to unfettered freedom of thought does not make us other or different. What is it to be a Newtonian (or what was it)? It was to follow Sir Isaac Newton in philosophy; to accept his mathematical methods and results; to calculate tides and eclipses in his way, and to investigate Nature generally by his principles. There are biographies of Newton, but we are not obliged to believe all that they contain, and we need not be troubled at their little differences. One of them has a story of his dog Diamond destroying his papers; another says that the story is fabulous, but it does not matter much. To be a Newtonian it is not necessary to know all about Newton, nor to believe all that is said. Even with regard to his teaching, we only accept what has stood the test, and we know now that he was wrong in one or two things. But he was a great master for all that. His discovery of gravitation spread light through the universe, and he deserves to be had in everlasting remembrance. In like manner a Gladstonian may be loyal without knowing all the facts about that statesman's birth and parentage, or sharing his views about Homer or Moses. And Christians may be loyal to Christ without accepting all that is affirmed in the creeds, or crediting every legend appended to the gospels. We are earnest to learn the truth about Jesus. We wish the narrative had been fuller. We wish it had been free from every element of exaggeration, mistake, or mythic legend. But if it is not, we must seek to discriminate and separate the chaff from the wheat.

Believing in Christ in the way I have described, we, of course, believe in God and his good Providence. The presence and power of God are never absent from the mind of Christ; and the comfort he derived thence he sought also to impart. God is is Heaven, and on earth too. The stars are his, and the flowers of the field. He clothes the lily, he feeds the sparrow. Pray to him, "Our Father, give us daily bread." But, indeed, He knows your needs, and in His sight ye are of more value than many sparrows. Thus the same almighty power fills the sun with morning light and guides the destiny of the sparrow. His tender mercies are over all his works. So said our great teacher; and we believe it, and are comforted by the thought. Time has rolled on since he spoke. The telescope has been invented, and the universe is discovered to be vaster than any one had dreamed; the suns and worlds are infinitely more in number. We are full of interest, but we are not disturbed in mind, for the astronomers discern that the law of gravitation is obeyed by those distant orbs, and we feel assured that the providence of God extends to every one of them. Other investigators tell us of the great antiquity of man, and of endless races of creatures that lived in far-off ages before man. This, also, is a wondrous revelation to us, but again it is not disturbing to our faith in God. We see in the rocks and their markings, in the creatures and their life, evidence of sunshine and rain and fruitful ground, then as now. The eyes of the creatures were blessed with light. They enjoyed their life, they illustrated the power of God, and now their remains are a great gallery of natural history for our instruction. The records and relics also of early man show us a school and theatre of human progress. The past is in God's keeping. In looking abroad upon the world of to-day—with all its joys and sorrows, its mixture of good and evil, its turmoil and its conflicts—it is our confidence that the Omnipotent Father knows everything, and that the judge of all the earth will do right. Further, in the personal history of the individual, we are persuaded that He ordains our birth, He watches over us through life, He receives us home at last. We can trust him, for "God is wisdom, God is love," and we feel assured that "all that we meet shall work for our good." Thus we believe in the fatherly providence of the ever-blessed God.

We make no question that we ought to obey God's laws. He is not only our King and Judge, but our Parent in the fullest and loftiest sense. We owe our birth and being to him; and all our powers and faculties, possessions and possibilities are his gifts. We ought to do his will. Nor has he left us without the means of learning it. Reason and judgment give us light;

experience corrects errors; and conscience (which Milton calls God's secretary) urges us to the right course. For the wayfaring man and the simple-hearted woman a practical guide is found in Christ's golden rule, to do to others as we would have them do to us.

In addition to these things we are persuaded of the law of retribution and reward. It is like a rule of Nature and a decree of Fate, that every one shall get his deserts sooner or later. Surely none can disbelieve it. It is in our nature and constitution to feel it. We cannot dismiss the feeling and we cannot escape the fact. If we act meanly, selfishly, unkindly; unjustly, cruelly, dishonestly, wickedly—we are self-condemned, and we begin to suffer at once. Nor is there any getting rid of the suffering until we repent and do better. Sin and suffering are terrible realities, from which we need to be redeemed. On the other hand, every act of duty and justice brings satisfaction to the breast. In all benevolence we find it more blessed to give than to receive. In patient endurance of affliction, in suffering for conscience' sake, in self-sacrifice, and the imitation of Christ, we reap Christ's own reward in the experience of inward serenity, and the assurance that the Father is with us. These results of conduct are illustrated even on earth, and the working out of them is calculated to produce heaven and hell, here or hereafter.

Needless to say that we believe in a Future Life, for which this present life is an education and preparation rather than a state of probation. We modestly speak of the hope of immortality rather than the demonstration of it. We admit that no traveller comes back to tell us of that country. But we have many reasons for our hope, in the analogy of Nature, the fragmentary character of the earthly life, and the Fatherly character of the ever-blessed God.

Thus we believe at least in all the things that are essential to religion and worship. We believe in God, and Christ, and Duty, and Immortality.

We know that there are many other matters about which Christians are interested—such as the creation of man, his temptation and fall, the curse upon the race, sacrifice for sin, incarnation of the Son of God, miracles of healing, miracles of resurrection and ascension, personality of the Holy Ghost, Trinity in Unity, inspiration and revelation. But these we regard as matters of opinion. They interest the mind, but they hardly feed the spirit. Opinion this way or that does not make a man more a child of God, nor help him to be brotherly to his brother. When we say they are matters of opinion and open to discussion, we do not mean that we have no opinion about them; for many of us have settled convictions, the result of prolonged inquiry. We have something definite to teach. But we refrain from dogmatising, and we think it unwarrantable to demand that other people should come to the same conclusions before we allow them to worship with us as full members of the same brotherhood. In the words of a Liberal Christian—the Hon. Horace Davies—"All we ask of the Christian who seeks our communion is that his attitude be reverent and free; that he stand with uncovered head in the presence of the Almighty, but with soul open like the flower of the field to every influence from above that may fall upon it."

These matters of discussion which we reduce to the second rank and class as non-essentials, may belong to theology, but they scarcely pertain to religion. They are not things of the heart and life, but rather of intellectual curiosity. Now it is legitimate for the mind to be curious, and to be fearless in pushing inquiry. There is no reason why godly Christian people should not throw themselves into the grand movement of the Renaissance, which began some four hundred years ago, and is flowing like a river of ever-increasing volume. There is no question that knowledge grows from more to more, and the moderns have fuller acquaintance with many things than the ancients had. Scientific men tell us that the earth is immensely ancient, that man's antiquity is to be measured by myriads of years, and he was not made in a moment. They say that no flood ever drowned all the world, and that six thousand years ago the Egyptians were building temples and the Babylonians were conducting warlike expeditions. Well, we regard it all as fair matter for inquiry. We do not feel called upon to suppress investigation, and we do not intend to be suppressed ourselves. We shall neither persecute nor allow persecution.

At present we do not all see alike, but some day we may. Men were unanimous once, in their ignorance; but as soon as they began to

explore and investigate they took different roads —they made maps and charts, which displayed differences. It could not be helped, and it does not greatly matter, so long as we refrain from concocting Athanasian creeds to damn those who differ from us. Let enquiry be free and active, and bye-and-bye we may be unanimous again, because every map and chart will have been perfected according to truth and fact. Meantime let it be recognised that in the very few beliefs and persuasions that are essential to Godliness and Christian worship we are agreed already. We believe in God, we revere Christ, we feel the obligation of duty, we are convinced that what a man soweth he will also reap, and we cherish the hope of immortality. These are the essential things, and in dividing them off and giving them a superior place to matters of mere controversy, we are separating the kernel from the husk ; we are promoting true religion while we conserve the liberty of the human mind ; and we are in entire agreement with Christ who declared that God our Father is One, and practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.

It is a long stride from the end of one session to the beginning of another. In the meantime so many things have happened. Summer has suddenly become autumn. Radiant blazers have given place to sombre overcoats. Our College has felt the change, and assumed a new appearance. In the Junior Common Room there is a melancholy vacuum, and we have not yet accustomed ourselves to this attenuated condition of things. The faces that we would gladly greet are here indeed ; but in a ghostly photograph hanging on the wall with the solemn gravity of a memorial tablet. *Eheu ! fugaces.* We seek some news of the departed, but the " denominational item " presents a strange and mysterious appearance. The familiars of the Common Room whom we slapped on the back and called, Tom, Dick, and Harry, are hardly to be recognised when arrayed in the appalling apparel of *The Reverend.* We had prepared ourselves for a change. We had musingly meditated during the vacation, " How shall we get on without ——? " " What will become of the Poz ? " " What will the new men be like ? " But meditation was futile piety, for the change is greater than we had dared conceive.

The third year's line of heroes has vanished. We rejoice with our friends in their speedy settlement :—Mr. Whitaker at the Free Christian Church, Leicester ; Mr. Johnson (for the absence of whose racy letters in these columns a monthly apology will be published by the present writer) at Small Heath ; Mr. Hall at Ashton ; Mr. Maley at Ilkeston. Messrs. Anderton and Warschauer continue their studies as Hibbert scholars. Mr. Herford is engaged in an interesting religious experiment at Oxford. We understand that he and his two companions are in the midst of the difficult early stages of forming a brotherhood, which aims at deepening the devotional life of our churches in a more definitely Christian direction. Mr. Herford, we believe, intends to start a Mission Church as soon as possible for the special purpose of gathering together men who will devote themselves to arduous missionary work in opening closed churches, &c., in return for their maintenance. There is an air of mystery about 32, Edith Road, which we suspect some friends will be wanting to penetrate. The " head of the house " will no doubt be ready to explain his plans. Some of us have visited this snug abode, and can testify to the excellence of the cooking. " Brother Donkey " is not going to be neglected. Mr. How, whose departure is keenly felt at the St. Ebbe's Institute, has returned to America. Rumour brings us glowing reports of the work of our friends. To all we send our most cordial greetings and good wishes.

Although thus deserted by a considerable number of tried warriors, we have not been left without powerful reinforcements. We welcome among us Mr. E. S. Hicks, B.A., late external student at Jesus College, Oxford ; Dr. Ahmed Shah, an Indian student from far-famed Tibet ; Mr. F. A. Homer, late of Durham University, and recently returned from Australia ; Mr. J. H. Woods, B.A., of Peterhouse, Cambridge ; who, seeing that he is a no mean wrangler, promises to be an acquisition to our debating power.

To Dr. Shah, who has already made himself an interesting personality, we would give a special welcome. His experiences are many and curious, and of some of these he is going to tell us at the next meeting of the Martineau Club. We hope he will feel that he is among friends anxious to make his stay in England both pleasant and profitable. Mr Sen must be glad to have a countryman of his own in the college. Both of our Eastern colleagues are excellent companions, and make us wish to see many more Indian students among us.

There are several new externals, but we shall leave these to be dealt with by a subsequent chronicler when they appear within the walls of Manchester College. It may come as a shock to our readers, but we feel bound to say that all these externals are not gentlemen. This, however, reflects no discredit upon them, and is accounted for by the fact that one of their number is a lady now studying at St. Andrew's.

The mantle of senior prophet has fallen upon the shoulders of Mr. J. H. Wicksteed, M.A., and a better or more popular appointment could not have been made. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hicks have won for themselves the B.A. degree, on which happy issue, in Oxford slang, *congraters.* Many of the interesting events of the session are, by this time, ancient history, but we must refer to some of them, The chapel, always beautiful, has been touched with new glories. Handsome oak seats to replace the chairs have been added by Mr. Arthur Greg to the gift of the magnificent oak screen in memory of the late Mr. Henry Russell Greg, who was a president of the College, honoured not less by the students than by the committee and staff. These seats are admired by

utilitarian and artist alike. All of them are not yet placed, but the remainder will be put in during the Christmas vacation. They harmonize perfectly with the rest of the oak work, and are praised by everyone. Nor is this all. A new stained glass window completes the series on the left side of the chapel. It is a singularly beautiful work, designed by Sir E. Burne Jones, and executed by the successors of the late William Morris. We hope no crude literalist will raise eyebrows when it is known that the subjects represent Elijah fed by a raven and Enoch walking with God. These fine figures are subscribed respectively,

"The Lord said unto me, behold, I put my words in thy mouth,"

and

"The Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save."

A brass tablet underneath is inscribed,

"In memory of William Phillip Price, of Tibberton Court, Gloucestershire.
Born 1817, died 1891."

This, but for two small windows in the chancel, completes a series unique in a University famous for its artistic windows. It is significant of the universal verdict that a little while ago the Professor of Architecture brought an admiring class of students to view our chapel. The building has not, of course, the associations of the rest of Oxford chapels, but in intrinsic beauty it is admitted to rank with the best, and it ought to acquit us for ever from the charge that Liberal Religion has no place in its worship for imagination, art, and symbolism. Some day, we hope, we shall have a form of divine service more in harmony with the wordless poetry of our surroundings, and more in keeping with the fragrant traditions of the University.

The opening address, by the Rev. Joseph Wood, naturally aroused criticism among his audience. It was, however, addressed primarily to the students, and we may be permitted to thank our Tate lecturer for a timely utterance received by all of us with sincere sympathy and interest. We are all pleased to have Mr Wood back again to continue his suggestive lectures. This term he treats of Rhetoric, taking Whately's classical work as a basis. For the present our weekly sermons are discontinued, and in class we devote ourselves to the analysis of great speeches, such as those of Fox, Burke, Pitt, Canning, Gladstone, and Chamberlain. We receive, in addition, private and individual lessons in reading and delivery. Mr. Wood has again succeeded in stirring up enthusiasm for the work, and Rhetoric will no longer be a despised art among us. Not the least valuable thing about these lectures is the ambition which they arouse in the students to be first and foremost good *preachers*, and the fault will certainly be ours if they do not have abiding results.

Mr Graham Wallas is the Dunkin lecturer for the term, his subject being *Local Government in England*. His lectures are extremely fresh and stimulating. Under his fascinating treatment the *Doomsday Book*—so gloomy and forbidding in title—becomes exciting as a romance.

We were pleased to have Mr Armstrong with us as special preacher on the second Sunday of term. He is always a welcome presence among us, and we were glad to see that his health is restored and his preaching as vigorous and deeply inspiring as ever.

The Shakespeare Society, of which our genial Hungarian student, Mr Löfi, is secretary, held its first meeting of the term on Wednesday, October 26, when Mr Wicksteed read a paper, listened to with keen interest, on "Shakespeare's Female Characters in Male Attire." This was followed by readings illustrative of the subject, and the meeting terminated after the ancient mysteries had been duly observed.

That excellent institution, the Martineau Club, held its first meeting of the term on Friday, October 29th, when we had a splendid attendance at dinner. After we had spent some time in chatting and smoking over the coffee, and in forming new acquaintances among the Undergraduates, Mr. Warde Fowler, Sub-rector of Lincoln College, read a paper, entitled "An Oxford Retrospect—1866-1897." This paper was aromatic with the fragrance of other days, and full-flavoured with delightful reminiscences of Mark Pattison and Jowett. It dealt especially with the "Ideal of a University" held by these great men—the former, with true academic instinct, anxious to preserve "learning for learning's sake," and so save our Colleges from becoming "advanced public schools;" the latter, zealous to bring into the mediæval seclusion of Oxford's grey quads and "dreaming spires," something of the life and civilization with which we are surrounded. The ever-active secretary (Mr. Wicksteed) promises the following programme for the remainder of the Session :—

Nov. 26.—Dr. Ahmed Shah, "Social and Religious Customs of Lower Tibet."
Feb. 4.—Mr. A. S. Ward, Balliol College.
March 4.—Prof. P. Gardner.
May 6.—Rev. J. E. Carpenter, Vice-principal of Manchester College.

The Discussion Society held its first meeting on November 3rd, the President (Dr. Drummond) being in the chair. The Senior Student (Mr. Wicksteed) did his best to persuade the house "that the use of alcoholic beverages is indefensible," and thereupon all hope of big bumping "sconces" in hall disappeared. There was no lack of speakers, and judging by the maiden efforts of several students, keen contests may be looked for in future debates. An amendment "that the use of the alcholic beverages is *inexpedient*" commended itself to the unanimous wisdom of the house. The social side of our College life is not neglected by our Dons. Dr. Drummond reserves his Saturday afternoons for walks with the students, who, on their return, accompany him to his house for tea. Prof. Upton's picturesque and charming retreat at Littlemore (formerly occupied by Cardinal Newman) is also open to us on Saturday afternoons, and Manchester College students are not infrequent guests at Prof. Odgers's "festive board." Prof. Carpenter continues his "At Homes" on Sunday afternoons. This term he is giving us addresses suggested by the "Life of Jowett," recently published. These interesting talks are accompanied by readings from articles dealing with the topics raised and from the poetry of Matthew Arnold, Clough, and others, suggestive of the psychological atmosphere in which Jowett breathed. We profoundly appreciate these and other opportunities for a more intimate and friendly intercourse with our professors than the lecture room permits. They have

our gratitude now, and in future years we shall look back to the pleasant hours thus spent.

The interest in the Institute at St. Ebbe's does not flag. The students, taking their turn by rotation, preach on Sunday evenings, whilst the Sunday School and other institutions are kept going by the valuable help of volunteers from the Manchester College congregation, with the assistance of several students, among whom Mr. Alfred Hall must especially be mentioned.

We are glad to be able to say that there are many calls upon the College for "supplies." Cheltenham, Evesham, Stratford, Warwick, Weymouth, are among the churches at which our students have preached These Sunday engagements, besides affording us opportunities for becoming acquainted with several congregations, give us the experience in preaching and the conduct of services which will enable us when we leave college to join the ministry, not as raw recruits, but with some practical knowledge of our duties.

The articles in the *Seed Sower*, on "Church Organisation" are beginning to excite attention and interest. Amid differing views we are all agreed that this is the question of the hour. It was discussed at our Debating Society last term, and it is not improbable that the subject may be again considered In the meantime we are eagerly awaiting further articles.

J. M. Lloyd Thomas.

Two Opposing Tendencies.

A consideration of the conflicting and mutually exclusive influences at present at work in our Churches, by the Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, B.A., minister of All Souls' Church, Belfast.

II.

The Old Religious Influence: How it has Lessened.

The founders of our churches were men who left, or stood apart from, the Established Church in the latter half of the seventeenth century, many of them resigning their livings or hopes of preferment in consequence of the Act of Uniformity in 1662.

Why did they take this course?

Briefly, because they felt the Creeds to be an inpediment to religion.

Yes, to *Religion*.

The result of their experience was that fixed forms of belief imposed as a condition of church membership were injurious to *godliness*.

They continually excited objections in conscientious minds, hindered the natural development of theological knowledge, stirred up strife in the Christian fold, and produced zeal for doctrine rather than love for God.

Our forefathers saw much of theological disputation, and were sick of it. They wanted *Religion*. They wanted warfare with sin, not with views. They wanted righteousness and love. They wanted simple, heartfelt worship, and the building-up of good lives. "Let us have churches," they said, "distinguished for their Christianity, not their opinions. Away with these creeds and confessions which have turned the Church of Christ into a theological academy. Let us have churches free from doctrinal limitations, and therefore free to do the work of the Gospel. Let us dedicate them simply to the worship and service of God. Let worship and service, not doctrine, be their distinguishing sign."

In short they founded their churches on the free-trust, because they desired them to stand for "mere Christianity." Their dream was that wherever there existed a non-subscribing church there should be an institution for the things of Christ. There should be a place where Christians, whatever their particular tenets, should feel their common sonship to God and common brotherhood in Christ, and should pray together to the great Father of all, and devote themselves to the great Master of all.

And for years this dream was fulfilled. The old meeting houses were of this character. Hidden away in narrow streets or up back-yards, they were religious homes. Men and women met in them knowing they could worship without having doctrines thrust upon them or being pestered by theological controversy. They gathered together as children of God in need of God, and as disciples of Christ who lacked the Christ spirit, and they separated, strengthened for the work of Christ amid the party conflicts and selfishness of the world.

The open-trust, therefore, was not, as has been meanly and falsely hinted, the outcome of a mere legal necessity. It was the result of the deep *religiousness* of men like Richard Baxter, men who were *not* Unitarians, who were little removed from orthodoxy in opinion, who were not indifferent about doctrine though they put religion before it, who held their particular tenets as courageously as any member of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association holds his to-day, but because they felt the Christian spirit to be of more account, refused to put them

in their church deeds or on the notice boards. It is a base untruth that our churches were not Catholic until they were Unitarian.

And traces of *ecclesiastical organisation* on the free-trust principle are abundant. The Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire, the name of Presbyterian still clinging to some of our churches, old minute books of Presbytery meetings and of ministerial gatherings for prayer and the study of scripture and exchange of advice on parochial work, are some of many witnesses to a deeper fellowship than that of theological agreement.

Yes, our forefathers worked and suffered and co-operated in the cause of *Religion before Doctrine.*

But in time the cause was weakened. Owing to their free-trusts, and consequent easier movement in theological thought, our churches soon came to differ in doctrine from other churches. It was inevitable that congregations not committed to particular theological conclusions should move away from the rest of Christendom, and be exposed to the charge of heresy. Without being aggressive they were attacked for false doctrine and compelled to defend themselves. Our ministers and people found it increasingly difficult to keep out of controversy. It drew nearer and nearer and at last invaded the Sunday worship. The growing prominence of doctrine and a corresponding drawing together in doctrinal matters in the congregations tended to hide the original religious and catholic basis of communion. Men like Priestley and *Belsham easily turned their congregations into Unitarian audiences by driving away those who differed from them. It is not too much to say that eager controversialists of their stamp tended to become champions of a theology rather than Christian ministers, and to make their meeting-houses theological institutes rather than Christian churches. At any rate, as their spirit extended, our churches became more and more known as Unitarian Chapels, until, in recent times, the acceptance by many of them of this doctrinal label has practically reversed the principle of their founders.

The decline of the religious and Catholic influence may be traced in many features of our church life. We may see it (1) in the decay of the *Service*—the putting away of the old liturgies, the treatment of the lessons and prayers and hymns as "preliminaries" to the discourse, the steady reduction of the whole to a one-man business, and the change of worshippers into "hearers"; (2) in the breaking-up of the old *Ecclesiastical Organisation*—the dissolution of the Presbyteries and Provincial gatherings, and, after a time, the substitution for these of doctrinal associations; and (3) in the deterioration of the *Ministerial Office*—the tendency in the minister to become a doctrinal agent, a leader of schoolroom charities and entertainments, or a permanent chairman of innumerable committees. At the present time, in not a few of our churches, interest in the worship has either been almost abandoned for useful work in the Sunday School (as is proved by miserable congregations in the church and a plentiful supply of scholars in the school), or is periodically whipped into temporary show of vitality by a course of lectures expository of "our Unitarian principles."

Perhaps no proof of this decline is more conclusive than what is known in some places as the *Forward Movement.*

Before me is an appeal from Essex Hall for a Forward Movement in our London churches in the Spring of 1895.

What was this Spring-time message to the Londoners? A call to new life in Christ? A summons to a new sense of what life may be? Did it seek to awaken shame in the tens of thousands of well-to-do people who spend their time and money frivolously and selfishly? Did it try to arouse the comfortable, indifferent citizen to the penury of the East End or the pitiful horror of the fashionable streets at night? What respectable provincial can spend a day and an evening in London and not be shocked at the stalking monsters of Selfishness, Drink, Hardness of Heart, Impiety, and Lust? What had our churches to say in the face of these things in their forward effort of the Spring of 1895? Did they plead for justice? Did they call on the youth of our congregations

*I regret extremely naming Theophilus Lindsey in my last paper as "a convert to Unitarianism who knowing nothing of our traditions, made his conversion an exchange of one dogmatism for another." These words apply not to Lindsey, whose position Mr. Freeston tells me was precisely that of Mr. Stopford Brooke, but to his successor, Belsham, who first made Essex Street Chapel a Unitarian Chapel.

to consecrate their lives, to take their stand with Christ against the world and the flesh, to realise the opportunities and responsibilities, and the rich rewards of life in Christ in the present age?

No, not one word of it. The "forward movement" which the age demands, according to our authorities at Essex Hall, is a strong, united effort to make *Anti-Trinitarians!*

The booklet before me describes its aim. It enumerates the "Great Truths of Religion," by which we are to understand that the "Bible is a treasure in earthern vessels," that "God is *One*," that Christ is "not a substitute," that "man is not fallen and totally depraved but only slowly rising," and so forth—a series of thin, doctrinal propositions, the entire acceptance of which would make no man one whit braver or purer. Then follows a note to the effect that "the headquarters of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association are at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, near the Law Courts," and after one or two similar pressing announcements, comes "A Brief Account of Unitarianism," a sketch of the rise of Unitarian doctrine in England and foreign countries, occupying twelve pages—with scarcely a reference to the history of our churches, and the noble principle of their founders of *Religion before Doctrine.*

What is here undertaken may be harmless and even good, but to call this a *forward movement* is a degradation of language. Whoever remembers what our ancestors suffered, and what they tried to hand on to us, and feels in any small measure the burning social and religious miseries of our time, and the urgent, the crying need of just those *religious homes* which our churches were intended to be, can only read this doctrinal manifesto with shame and humiliation. A fig for such a Forward Movement! Any Wesleyan Bethel in a country village has a deeper sense of the work of Christ. Is this the cause which is to attract men like Dr. Horton, Dr. Clifford, Canon Barnett, Canon Scott Holland, or the benighted Rev. Hugh Price Hughes to our communion? Is this the crusade to which we are summoned by our leaders, and which is to enlist and quicken our highest powers?

Churches are necessarily weakened by countenancing this kind of revival.

On the front page of the pamphlet it is stated, with truth, that "multitudes hold aloof from all churches largely because of the irrational doctrines preached as Christianity." The writer does not add, however, that there are probably no churches from which the multitudes hold more aloof or to which they feel less drawn for the satisfaction of their deepest needs, than those which, false to the religious and Catholic principle of their founders, have allowed themselves to be used in the interests of a doctrinal propaganda, and to be labelled "Unitarian Churches."

A *Unitarian Church*, a place of worship which warns off by its title all but those of a particular school of theology, and thereby declares its interest in men's opinions rather than in themselves, and its anxiety to convert them to correct thinking rather than to Godly living, is inherently feeble and doomed. No amount of theological zeal can make it live. It cannot live, for the simple reason that it does not deserve to.

[*To be continued.*]

Thoughts at the Leicester Meetings.

Those of us who attended the B. and F. Autumnal meetings experienced a great access of hope in the future of our religious movement. It arose from the fact that we sighted the end of a certain discussion which has occupied much of our best energy for a long time; we saw that it would be ended, not in a solution which would give the victory to either of the two opposing tendencies, but rather in a *dissolution* of the whole discussion on its present level, and its tranference to a higher region.

The use of the word Unitarian in connection with our churches and our work, "open trusts," denominationalism, "freedom," organisation, have been the main points in a dialectical process that has gone forward amongst us for months and years, getting a little help here and a little there, but moving upon the whole impersonally (as is the nature of dialectic, or as some would say, of spirit). And now that the simple and conclusive word has been spoken, we are all feeling as Huxley felt when he read Darwin's epoch-making book, "How stupid not to have thought of that before!" The elements of the solution were pointed out in different ways by Mr. Hargrove and Mr. Jacks. "We stand for Catholicity! We stand for principles—not for doctrines which stand over in hard intellectual antagonism to other people's doctrines—but for principles which contain in themselves the antidote to bigotry."

The discussion has hitherto proceeded upon a strictly intellectual level, and two perfectly logical positions faced each other, without any obvious escape from the antagonism. (1) The "Liberals" (and we have all been Liberals once!) have kept alive the noble enthusiasm of

freedom. "Open trusts," no denominational crystallisation, no tyranny of the majority, no "creed," have been their faithfully preserved ideals; and I hope we shall always be grateful.

(2). The "other people" have been earnest to insist on *positive* traditions, the maintenance of a positive faith, the need of definiteness, of a common aim and agreement *somewhere*. They are not opposed to "open trusts," they even profess a distant admiration for the word of the magnified initial, they love Freedom. But they point out that liberty easily glides into licence, that you *must* have a limit somewhere, and that there always is in practice, whatever our theory may be, a real agreement, as, *e.g.*, that we meet for worship, to pray and praise; and that while no one in the pew is bound to stand up and follow the minister in his profession of faith, still, there is a practical agreement in thought and much more in feeling. A letter which appeared in the *Inquirer*, over the letters G.O.S. (Oct. 9), stated that the Unitarian position is that of "one who follows Christ in holding the great doctrine of the Divine Unity in the strictest sense," and went on to remark, "a general agreement in fundamental points is necessary for Christian union." The orthodox friend to whom the letter was sent replied: "Your creed is in reality quite as pronounced and exclusive as my own." The difficulty is a real one. In the eyes of the whole religious world, our differentiation (learnt from our statements) is an intellectual and a theological one, in spite of our Liberals and our innocent notice boards.

Thus the dilemma has presented itself. We need definiteness—more than ever we need a clear trumpet voice in this night of the modern world; but definiteness seems to mean "creed." It must do so while the discussion remains at an intellectual level. But suppose that, as a fact, our real differentiation has all along been, not a system of doctrines, not even a method of inquiry, but a *spirit*, a temper, a disposition. Suppose that our real significance in the evolution of modern religion has been, and has increasingly appeared to be, that we have striven to lay the stress of religion not upon anything so abstract—so low down in the scale of the Spirit's achievements—as the logical intellect, but upon the whole, concrete endeavour of man—thought and feeling and imagination of love—as he fronted the Inscrutable Mystery!

The cardinal difference between Unitarians and every other body of religious people is that each of these (in so far as its doctrines radically differ from those of others) denies the validity of the religion of all the rest; whereas Unitarians believe that there is true religion in all the sects and all the creeds. If a man within one of the sects declares that its doctrines "do not matter" he thereby gives up the doctrines as taught: for if they are true they *do* matter—more than anything else in the world; and by making such an admission—as that men may be religious without any, or with any, particular system of intellectual conceptions—he becomes what we mean by "a Unitarian." We stand for Catholicity: (1) not for negative freedom, which Hegel says "is actuated by a mere solitary abstract idea, whose realisation is nothing but the fury of desolation." Catholicity defines us: it gives a limit in that it commits us to religion. But it does more: it gives a real content to our freedom, and a function in the living world of to-day. (2) Not for Unitarian dogma: but for the religious spirit that transcends the antagonisms of doctrines. It is anti-Trinitarian only in the sense that it denies religious importance to the doctrine of the Trinity or any other doctrine.

It remains to be seen whether this interpretation of a name that has hitherto had a mainly theological meaning will have sufficient force to overcome the practical difficulties of its application: as *e.g.*, in the title of the "British and Foreign." If, however, our churches are to respond to the clear call of the times, if they are to be equal to the task of supplying a religious centre for the great new movements with whose fate is bound up the future of our country—especially the new, blind, pathetic zeal for "humanity"—we shall have to fling out this great watchword of Catholicity, that the world waits to hear.

W. WHITAKER.

Christmas Carols.

The word carol has been variously derived; by some it is taken from Karole (an early English word for a ring or circle); but it more truly seems to mean a little chorus, a diminutive form of the word choro, thence chorollo. And it is noteworthy that all genuine carols have a chorus or burden, and that this chorus is prefixed to them in every instance, whether it consists of one or, as is more common, of two lines, thus:—

DE NATIVITATE.

Jhesu, fili Virginis,
Miserere Nobis.

I.

Jhesu of a mayde ye woldest be born,
To save mankyde that was forlorne, &c.

The derivation of the word Noel is more disputable. It was long said that it was a mere corruption of natale (nativity), but this would not seem to be a satisfactory reading. Preferable is its origin in nova, thence nouvelles, or news; nowells, the old English form of the word; nouve, the Romance, and noël, rightly understood, is nothing but news, a name for the thing, the good news of God, the glad tidings of goodwill, the birth of the Saviour of the world. The oldest carols confirm the use of the word in such a sense; and so, in an indirect manner, do many fifteenth-century books. It was, for example, the custom to cry nowells for any king or hero in a triumphal procession. "Item—to the boys—who cried nowells before the King's

Majesty," appears in the municipal expenditure of an English town during a royal visit. "To ride and cry nowells on high days is not the only business of a true Knight," hints Gutterre de Garnez, in his great Spanish chronicle, called the "Victorial." And so on, for it would be easy to multiply examples of this custom; but the carols speak for themselves. Take this one, for example :—

A child this day is born,
A child of high renown;
Most worthy of a sceptre,
A sceptre and a crown.
Nouels, Nouels, nouels,
Sing all we may,
Because the King of all kings
Was born this blessèd day.

Also, of older date, the following:—

ONE SANG OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.
(*With the tune of Bawlulalaw.*)

I.

I come from hevin to tell
The best nouvelles that ever befell.
To you these tidings true I bring,
And I will of them say and sing, &c.

The many collections of authentic English carols are excellent and curious. Wright's is, perhaps, the finest, but Sandy's book will be found full of interest, and he has admitted some translations of French noëls, with their notes. As regard MSS. collections, one of the rarest is at Oxford, in the common place book of one, Richard Hill, servant to an Alderman Whynger, afterwards Lord Mayor of London, in 1505. Of French noëls there is no lack of either, the best thing being the "Noëls Bourgignon," collected by M. la Monnaye (the ingenious author of "M. de la Palisse"), and a volume dating from the reign of Louis XIII., the work of Michael Saboly, a priest of Avignon. Yet of carols, both French and English, it must be admitted as a rule, that the authors are long since forgotten, and that they, in their turn, probably drew from older sources. What, for example, has become of all the airs Saboly loved? of the tune of "l'Ecò," to which one of the quaintest of his poems is set? or of the tune and words of "Dans a beau jour," or "Dis-moi, Grisel?" or who was the composer of that tune of "Bawlulalaw," which we have seen was of fifteenth-century reputation in England? They are all past recovery, and any classification of the carols can only be made by guessing their date from their spelling, and by noticing some peculiarities which are found alike in the carols of France and of England. The first place we shall assign to those which are written partly in Latin and partly in the vulgar tongue, and which we can imagine to have been composed by clerks, and persons conversant with the ritual and phraseology of the Church. The chorus, or chorollo, of these pieces is in Latin; sometimes the last line of each verse is in Latin, and the rhyme is thus carried on in what may be called tags of verse. An example of the first method is taken from Hill's MSS.; of the second, from a rare French tract of the sixteenth century :—

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Deo patria, sit gloria.

Ther ys a blossom sprung of a thorn,
To save man-kynd that was forlorne,
As the Profittis sayd beforne,
Deo patria, sit gloria.

Ther shon a star out of hevyn bryght,
That men of earth should deme aright,
That this was Jhesus fulle of myghte.
Deo patria, sit gloria.

Noel nouveau, sur l'air de, or—"Dites-nous, Marie!"

Célébrons la naissance,
Nostri Salvatoris,
Qui fait la complaisance,
Dei sui Patris.

Cet enfan tout aimable,
In nocte media,
Est né daus une étable,
De Castia Maria.

A second class is the historical ballad. Of such are the carols :—

When God at first created man.

On Christmas day in the morning.

Augustus Cæsar having brought
The world to quiet peace.

When Jesus Christ was twelve years old.

Joseph being an aged man truly.

And

A Virgin most pure as Prophets do tell.

All carols still in use in the West of England, and familiar to many of us. These are just passages of gospel history done into rough verse; and besides the songs intended for Christmas there are similar carols suited to Innocents', St. John the Baptist, and St. Stephen's Days, as, indeed, also for the Feast of the Epiphany, and

pieces which commemorate the later events in the Saviour's life. A third kind of carol is founded on a legend. Take, for example, the well-known one :—

Joseph was an old man,
And an old man was he,
When he wedded Mary, the maid of Galilee, &c.

This carol tells how a cherry-tree was made to bend and yield its fruit to the Virgin Mother at the command of her Divine, but yet unborn, son. It is a tradition familiar, in one shape or other, to the whole of Europe, though in Spain the tall and beautiful date-palm replaces the cherry-tree of the northern nations. It is probable, therefore, a fragment out of that vast mass of unwritten, fanciful, and semi-pagan tradition which occupied the mouths and memories of men even in the earliest Christian centuries, which assumed shape and consistency in the so-called apocryphal gospels of Nicodemus and others, and which went, at a later period, to fill the pages of the Legenda Aurea of Jacopo de Vorragine.

We are next brought to observe a fourth set of Christmas songs; the begging letters of a former age, still practised by the waits, with a view to extracting largesse from sleepy-headed citizens. A fifth class relates to wassail and feasting, and as these represent practices still in vogue among us, we need not expatiate on them; the songs for the "Bringing in of the Boar's head" being the most picturesque, and the "Beggars complaints," the more monotonous of the two. There is, however, a kind of carol now quite forgotten, which, for want of a better name, we shall call the "Christmas pastoral," and explain our meaning by quotations from English and Provencal sources, we are convinced our readers will be glad to know :—

JOLY, JOLY WAT, THE SHEPHERD.

Can I not sing but hoy !
When the joly Shepherd made so mych joy ?

I.

A Shepherd upon a hill he satt,
He had on hym his tabard and hatt,
Hys tarbox, hys pype, and hys flagatt ;
Hys name was called Joly, Joly Wat.
Can I not sing but hoy !
When the joly Shepherd made mych joy ?
For he was a gude herdis boy,
Ut hoy !
For in hys pype he made so mych joy !

II.

The Shepherd upon a hille was layd,
His doge to hys gyrdylle was tayd ;
He had not slept but a lytelle brayed,
But "Gloria in Excelsis" to hym was sayd,
Can I not sing, &c.

III.

The Shepherd upon a hille he stode,
Rownd about hym hys shepe they yode
He saw a star as rede as blode.
Can I not sing, &c.

IV.

The Shepherd sayd a-non-right,
"I wille go see yon farly syght,
Wher as the angelle syngeth on hight,
And the star that shyneth so bryght."
Can I not sing, &c.

V.

"Now farewell Mall, and also Will !
For my love go ye all styll,
Unto I cum agayn you till ;
And ever more, Will, ring well thy bell."
Can I not sing, &c.

VI.

"Now must I go ther Cryst was borne,
Farewell ! I cum a-gayn-to-morn,
Dog, kepe well my shepe fro the corn,
And warn well warrock when I blow my horne."
Can I not sing, &c.

VII.

When Wat to Bedlam cum was,
He swet ; he had gone faster than a pace ;
He found Jhesu in a sympile place,
Betwen an ox and an asse.
Can I not sing, &c.

VIII.

"Jhesu ! I offer to thee here my pype,
My skyrte, my tarbox, and my scyrpe,
Home to my fellowes now wille I skype
And look unto my shepe."
Can I not sing, but hoy !
When the joly, joly Shepherd made such joy ?

No gleanings from sixteenth-century books can be pleasanter than this, and the volume of Provencal Nouve, which we have already alluded to, is full of similar pieces. It is written in dialect, the "lengo dè las pastouras," as the Provencals say, and their patois certainly lends itself with infinite grace to the subject.

Micoulau, or Michael Saboly, was born in 1614. Jan Saboly, of Monteri, his father, and Felise Meliorat, his mother, were of gentle blood, and the boy's education in the Jesuit College of Carpentras removed him early from the peasantry of his native district; but he had found, apparently, both love and piety, and their handmaid. Poetry, in huts where the poor men lie,

and, speaking and writing in their language, once that of kings and troubadours, he still survives as a poet of the people. His verses even now gladden the peasants at the time of calender for so this population, which uses the oldest of the Romance dialects, persists in calling the season which in the pagan division of the year fell into the Kalends of January. The Provencals are naturally religious, gifted with lively and sensitive imaginations, they write and read a quantity of religious poetry, and their genius is apt to express itself in this way, whether the subject be the sufferings of the Protestants during the persecutions, or the great festivals of the Latin Church. To them Christmas is what they call it, "The mother of nights," and the Nouv'e of Saboly are still living poems, not scraps of antiquarian lore exhumed by the ritualist or the antiquarian. The good old priest who composed them was for twenty-five years prior of Sainte Madelaine of Carpentras, and was then removed to the collegiate church of St. Peter in Avignon, the university bestowing on him the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In Avignon, as Maestro di capello, Saboly lived; he played on the great organ of the Church, and he played on the hearts of the people by his beautiful Christmas hymns. He has been fondly called "The troubadour of Bethlehem," and when he died he was buried in the Church where he had sung, and there by the swift Rhone he rests. Saboly's Noëls are, for the most part, the kind we call pastorals; sometimes he makes us hear the shepherds asking leave of their employers to go and see the babe of Bethlehem, thus :—

LOU PASTRE.

" Es fort bien veritable
(It is very really true)
Tue lou pichet innocent
(That the little innocent)
Es na dins un estable
(Is born in a stable)
Qui es auprés do Betelem."
(Which is near Bethelem).

SON MESTRE (The Master).

" Que lou Fieû de Dieu sie nos,
(That the son of God is born),
Per lou creire,
(To believe it,)
Lou fau veire;
(One must see it;)
Jeu pode pas me l'imagina."
(I cannot fancy it.)

After some more altercation both master and servants departed on the joyful errand. Sometimes he shows us the shepherds carrying pine wood for the fire, and woollen stuffs for the clothing of the marvellous Babe. Sometimes we hear them calling to each other :—

" Venès leu !
(Come along !)
Veire la Pieûcello.
(See the little one.)
Venès leu !
Gentil pastoureaux ;
(Come, gentle shepherds ;)
Soun Enfant es pu blanc que la neû,
(Her child is more white than the snow),
E trèlusis coume un' estello.
(And shineth as a star.)
Ai, ai, ai ! que la Maire es bello !
(Ah ! but the mother is fair !)
Ai, ai ! que l'Enfant es beu ! "
(Ah ! beautiful is the child !)

On arriving at the stable they are refused admittance because they are too noisy :—

" Chut, chut, chut ! que l'Enfant soumiho !
(Hush ! let the infant slumber !)
Chut ! que lou Petit dor."
(Hush ! let the little one sleep,) &c.

And now, as we have leave of the old priest of Avignon, whose bells are still chiming above his grave in St. Peter's choir, we enter a little into the joy of his song. This day is bright, even in the saddest year; it is an anniversary of youth, and peace, and heavenly hope in the loneliest life; in every life from which the birthdays and the holidays have been erased by death or change, or have been blotted out with tears. Under the crumbling porticoes of Rome, through all the short and rainy Advent days, you may hear the Pifferari piping and singing to their Madonna of the joys of the coming Nativity, and we ourselves, beside the broken idols and in the dismantled homes of this life, can sing our carols before the dawn.

Christmas Greeting.

Down the ages hoary,
Peal the song of glory,
Peace, and God's good will !
Other echoes die away,
But the song of Christmas day
Echoes from Judean hill,
Ever clearer, louder still,
Oh, may its holy, heavenly chime
Make all thy life a Christmas time !

Character Lessons.

FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES.

By George H. Young.

LESSON XIV.

SELF-CULTURE.

"Each pleasing art lends softness to the mind,
And with our studies are our lives refined."

Hear instruction and be wise.—*Prov.* viii. 33.

1. What duty do you owe to yourself?
   To make of myself the most possible.
2. How can you do this?
   By careful attention to mind, body, and soul.
3. What do you say of your mind?
   That I ought to cultivate it.
4. How?
   By reading, study, and reflection.
5. Why?
   To increase my real value, so as to be all that is possible to myself and the world.
6. What ought you to read?
   The best literature.
7. Is it important to shun bad books and papers?
   Yes, because they pollute the mind.
8. Ought you to use ungrammatical phrases or slang?
9. Why not?
10. How does association with people who constantly use flippant speech injure you?
11. In what way does reflection on good reading help us?
12. Are you doing all possible for self-culture?
13. What ways can you think of in which you might improve?
14. What is the true end of all education?
15. Who are the best-cultured people whom you know or have read about?
16. What good book are you at present reading?
17. What useful study now interests you?
18. What value ensues from committing to memory fine poetry or choice bits of prose?
19. How can you elevate your taste in literature?
20. If you have no thought about these things, what will result?
21. What kind of reading will best aid culture?
22. Read Emerson's chapter on "Books" ("Society and Solitude") and give its principal points to the class.

Recite 2 Chron. i. 10, 11; Prov. ii. 10, 11; xvi. 16.

To the Teacher.—Good opportunity is here offered to urge honour in school, choice in reading, abstaining from hurtful literature which inflames the passions. Talk with the class about forming choice home libraries. Seek to make prominent the high pleasure resulting from culture. Use illustrations of many of the world's workers who have sacrificed much for education.

"The Helper."*

This is in many respects a charming and a useful book. It consists mainly of sets of Lesson-Notes for Sunday School classes by such experienced workers as the Revs. E. I. Fripp, W. H. Drummond, B.A., R. C. Moore, W. Wooding, B.A., "Aunt Amy," and other well-known contributors to Sunday School literature. These are varied by articles and essays dealing with teachers' difficulties, model services, the Sunday School Library, and illustrative stories. We heartily recommend the book, not only to all engaged in Sunday School work, but to all parents who are looking for helps and hints in the religious education of their children. "The Helper" is a golden treasury of plans, lessons, thoughts, and suggestions.—If a second volume is contemplated we would suggest a little more method, or a different method in the arrangement of the contents. The papers, subjects discussed, and lesson-notes should not be scattered about, as if "The Helper" were a periodical, but each set of lesson-notes and each subject discussed should follow on without break. There are some excellent papers, for instance on "Child Study," which have to be hunted for in various parts of the book, instead of being brought together in one place. This, however, is a small criticism. The book has been well designed for the objects in view, and on the whole admirably carried out.

* "The Helper:" A Handbook for Sunday School Teachers and Parents. Edited by Marian Pritchard. London: Sunday School Association, Essex Hall. Price 2s. 6d.

The discipline of temptation is what we must have to toughen the moral fibre. How can the soul learn to choose good rather than evil, unless it has the evil presented to it as well as the good?—*Henry W. Foote.*

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Roger and the Christmas Goose.

In spite of the snow and his wet feet, in spite of the weight of the basket, in spite of the fact that he was nearly frozen stiff with the cold, indeed, in spite of many disagreeable and unpleasant things, Roger Falconer was just about the happiest small boy in the whole world. As he trudged along with his basket on his arm he whistled merrily. What did he care for wet or cold or snow? What did he care! Why, nothing at all; he had forgotten all about them. His thoughts were busily occupied with something else—something that was in his pocket, something not very big, but very smooth and flat, and round and bright—something that had a portrait of a lady on one side of it—a new half-crown, in fact. From time to time as he marched along he turned the coin in his pocket, and then gently patted the goose which was lying in his basket. Roger had very pleasant thoughts in connection with that goose, for it was through it he was the happy possessor of the half-crown. It happened in this way. Roger was spending the day before Christmas Day in running errands for his uncle, who was a poulterer. Early that afternoon a gentleman, followed by a little dog, had come into the shop, and having bought the finest, fattest goose in the place, had asked for it to be sent to his house immediately. In paying for the goose there was half-a-crown change, and the gentleman had kindly given it as a Christmas-box to the boy who was to carry the basket. That fortunate boy was Roger. Roger set out merrily on his journey. He made up his mind that he would go very quickly to the gentleman's house, and there on the way back spend his half-crown. It was all very well to make good resolutions, but by no means as easy to keep them. For some time he tramped on steadily; but when he came to the shop where he intended to spend his money he could not resist the temptation of putting down his basket and looking in at the window. Then in two seconds the goose and the basket were quite forgotten, and his thoughts were far away. He had a vague idea once that some boys were shouting, but he paid no attention and only pressed his face closer to the shop window. Suddenly he felt something strike him in the middle of the back, he turned sharply round just in time to receive something in his face. It was a snowball. Roger was a boy of hasty temper, and quickly picking up a handful of snow he looked round to find out who had attacked him, and to return the blow. A short distance from him two boys were standing laughing. Roger asked no questions but threw the snowball swiftly at one of them. "Who are you thowing at?" shouted the boy. "You," answered Roger; "what did you mean by throwing at me when I was not looking?" "Not looking indeed," retorted the boy, "you should have been looking. I did it for your good. You seemed to have gone to sleep." Roger felt very indignant. What business had this boy, this stranger, to interfere with him? Without waiting to talk any more, he set to work to make himself a pile of snowballs. The other boy did the same, and presently all three were hard at work throwing the snow at one another. Roger was very quickly covered with snow, and wetter than ever. He was getting very much the worst of it, too, for it was a case of two to one. All three boys worked hard until they were obliged to stop for want of breath. By that time Roger's indignation had quite subsided, and as he had greatly enjoyed the fight he decided to go and make friends with his late opponents. He walked towards them, then all at once stopped. Quite unconsciously, he had put his hand in his pocket and touched his half-crown, and directly he felt that, he remembered his errand. Quickly turning back, he ran to his basket, looked into it, and then stood aghast. The other parcels were there, but the goose was gone! Roger could not believe his eyes, and unpacked his basket. But it was too true; the goose, the fine fat goose, had disappeared. He gave a sharp cry of surprise and horror, and at once one of the boys, thinking he had been hurt in the fight, came running up to see what was the matter. "It's gone," said Roger. "What shall I do?" "What is it that's gone? asked the boy." "The goose," stammered Roger, "the goose I was taking to the gentleman's house." "Then I expect the dog went off with it after all," said the boy, quite calmly. "The dog went off with it? What dog? where did he go? tell me quickly," said Roger excitedly. "The dog I called out to you about," said the boy. "When you were staring in at the shop window just now, I saw a dog walk up to your basket, and take hold of something. I shouted out to you, but you took no notice, so I threw a snowball at the dog, unfortunately, I missed him, so then I threw one at you, to attract your attention, you fired back, and then, in the excitement of the battle, I forgot all about the dog; but you may be sure he has walked off with the goose." "Whatever shall I do?" said Roger. "Do help me." The boy, whose name was Archie Yeld, was by this time very much interested in Roger's troubles, and promised to do all he could. The only question was what was to be done? Although both boys hunted for some time they could find no trace of the dog's footsteps or the dog, and at last had to give up the search. After some discussion, it was decided that they should both go to the big house, and try to see the gentleman. A little later, trembling and crying, the two boys were sitting in the hall of the big house, waiting to see the gentleman, Mr. Hastings, who was, the maid said, at dinner. The boys were now more unhappy than ever. Roger got so frightened at last that he tried to persuade Archie not to wait any longer, but to slip out of the front door, and run home. Archie was about to agree when the sitting-room door opened, and out came Mr. Hastings, followed by a small dog. Both boys rose, as he came towards them, and Roger turned very pale. Archie, however, got most excited at the sight of the dog, and began poking and nudging Roger; but Roger was too much frightened to take any notice, and the dog only looked at the boys, and ran straight downstairs. "Well, boys, what is it?" asked Mr. Hastings. "Please,

sir, I'm very sorry," said Roger, with a tear in his eye and a sob in his voice, "but I've lost your goose. Here's the half-crown." Mr. Hastings did not quite seem to understand, and Archie did not make matters much clearer by saying excitedly—"Yes, sir, but a dog took it, for I saw him." "What have you done?" asked the gentleman. "What dog took what!" Please, sir," said Roger sorrowfully, "you know the goose you bought this afternoon?" Yes, that's all right enough. "No, it isn't right," said Roger. I've lost it. "But the cook said," began Mr. Hastings, then he stopped, and, turning to the servant, said, "Go and tell cook I want to speak to her." Then, directly the cook appeared, Mr. Hastings asked her if the goose he had bought in the afternoon had been sent home. "Yes, sir, it came about half-an-hour ago," was the answer. "What, shouted both the boys." Boys, "be quiet," said Mr. Hastings. "Who brought it?" he asked the cook. "Well, sir, I thought you did. I found it lying at the top of the stairs, and, to tell you the truth, I thought it was rather knocked about." "Isn't it very queer? demanded Roger eagerly. "Would you mind fetching it," said Mr. Hastings. "And let us look if it actually is the one I bought?" She turned to go, but suddenly stopped, for a mysterious noise was heard as if something were tumbling downstairs. It proved to be something tumbling up, for presently the dog appeared with the goose in his mouth. As soon as he found that he was being watched he tried to get away and hide, but he was too late—this time he was found out. After all, Archie was right, the dog was at the bottom of it all. He had been with his master when the goose was purchased, and when, on leaving the shop, Mr. Hastings had told him to go home he had followed Roger all the way. Then, when the basket had been put down, he had helped himself to the goose, and carried it home. Evidently he thought that his master had intended him to take charge of it. The boys had a good laugh; and then, to Roger's delight, Mr. Hastings said that though he had not earned it, he might keep the half-crown for all his trouble.

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And gain is gain however small.—*Browning.*

In every gladness, Lord, Thou art
The deeper joy behind.—*Macdonald.*

In heaven above
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.
—*Wordsworth.*

Thou hast proved that purest joy is duty.
—*H. Coleridge.*

'Tis mine—to boast no joy
Unsobered by such sorrows of any kind
As sully with their shade my life that shines.
—*Browning.*

Take joy home,
And make a place in thy great heart for her,
And give her time to grow, and cherish her!
Then will She come and often sing to thee
When thou art working in the furrows; ay,
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad—
Joy is the grace we say to God—*J. Ingelow.*

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